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Sri Kashinatha Granthamala

Saptatrimsha Pushpa (No. 37)

SHAKTI-VISHISTADVAITA

OR

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECT OF VIRASAIVISM

R. CHAKRAVARTI, M.A., LL.B.

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PREFACE

The basis for this little book is a lecture on "*Śakti-Viśiṣṭādvaita*", delivered by *Pandit Śri Kāśinātha Śastri*, before the Mysore Philosophical Congress in the year 1935 and subsequently printed as the final section of his book entitled "*Vīraśaiva Ratna*". The main thesis of this lecture has been preserved here with such alterations, omissions and additions as were found necessary to make the book as comprehensive in its English garb as the scope of the lecture allowed; and the outward lecture-form is maintained with a view to make it uniform with the other sections of the English edition of the above work of the learned Pandit. It is my earnest desire that this little book should by no means be taken for an exhaustive treatise on the topics it purports to deal with and that, at its very best, it may only serve as an introduction to a more elaborate and comprehensive volume on the subject which I am making ready for the press. I crave the indulgence of my generous reader for many a possible error of judgment and obscurity of expression he may happen to meet with here.

MYSORE,
20—9—1938.

R. Chakravarti.

INTRODUCTION

The cult of Śiva is at once the most ancient and the most modern of all the religious systems of India. It is ancient in the sense that its origin and prevailence can be traced far back into the dim antiquities of the religious experience of the people of this country and its modernity is strikingly apparent in its comprehensive grasp of the fundamental problems of existence and experience, centuries in advance of the modern era, and in its scientific method of investigation with a hard realistic outlook of the phenomenal world of matter, which it never loses sight of even while attaining to the emotional heights of religious experience. The spirit of enquiry maintained by its votaries has such an appealing touch of sincerity and deep religious fervour about it, that while its logic is most convincing, even its dogmas carry with them an almost irresistible persuasive influence, as a result of which this great system has always commanded not only the greatest number of following from among the teeming millions of this country, but also a great respect and reverence from among those who are not the adherents of its faith. While, as a result of centuries of spirited enquiry and accumulated experience, its philosophers have built an edifice of amazingly daring speculations offering a metaphysical solution for the fundamental problems of reality and religious quest, the system has produced some of the greatest saints and religious men that ever adorned any country of the world and has given birth to such precious gems of literature and art, that should, today, be not merely the glowing monuments of India's past glory, but the most precious heritage of her proud posterity as well. It is

therefore no wonder that such an eminent authority on this system as Dr. Pope, who had bestowed the best of his thoughts and critical judgment on the religious systems of India, came to regard it as "the most elaborate, influential, and undoubtedly the most intrinsically valuable of all the religions of India."[1] "No cult in the world" says Barnett, speaking about the literature produced by the saints and savants of this religion, "has produced a richer devotional literature, or one more instinct with brilliant imagination, fervour of feeling and grace of expression."[2] "In no literature with which I am acquainted" says Sir George Elliot, "has the individual religious life—its struggles and dejections, its hopes and fears, its confidence and its triumphs received a delineation more frank and more profound."[3] No greater testimony, however, is needed to reveal the intrinsic greatness of this ancient religious system than its steady progress in one form or other through the length of time from beyond memory to the very present day, in the very teeth of diverse warring creeds, faiths and tenets all over India.

The identification of the Supreme Spirit with Śiva—the auspicious form of the vedic god Rudra—was the earliest and the most universally accepted religious absolutes of ancient India; and in the subsequent history of religions and religious institutions of this country, the Śiva cult has been the one persisting influence which has held together the Hindu society during the amazing vicissitudes of its fortune and career through the adverse

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[1] Introduction to Tiru-vasaham P. LXXIV.

[2] "The Heart of India" P. 82.

[3] "Hinduism and Buddhism" Vol. II—P. 217.

currents of countless faiths and cults which waxed and waned. The Śaiva influence was never feebled even when the strong ethical forces of Buddhism and Jainism ruled this vast continent. On the other hand, as opposed to these mighty currents, Śaivism maintained its stubbornly dynamic force and remained the main outward expression of the struggling Brahmanical religion of the Upaniṣads, which still carried their influence with a dogged persistence through the avalanche of relentless logic of the Buddhistic nihilism and the devastating influence of atheistic sophistry. This was the formulative period of the great philosophical systems of Inida and Saivism which was the ruling religious expression of the gradually disintegrating Hindu society, was busy laying a strong philosophical foundation for the eternal religion of the Vedas, while a most influential and adventurous section of the population of this country went abroad, established Hindu colonies of modern Annam, Combodia, Java, Sumatra and Bali islands and sowed seeds of Śaivism which blossomed into a glorious religion in the alien soil.

The latest archeological researches in the Sindh have brought out an amazing revelation not only of the universal popularity and influence of the cult of Śiva in the dim periods of India's buried past, but also of the hitherto missing link which connects this continent with the great antiquity of an once powerful civilization in Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and South-America which strongly pointed towards its Indian orgin; and the discovery of the symbols of Śiva in the most unexpected quarters of the globe, has solved this mystery for ever and bears unmistakable testimony to the wide Śaiva influence in that dawn of world civilization

It is not however my task to reiterate here the strong evidence unearthed by archeologists or the force of arguments advanced by research scholars with regard to the great antiquity of the Śaiva religion. My purpose is mainly to point out the long trail of un-broken tradition left behind this great religious system from time immemorial and its unassailable authority which is rooted in the hoary Vedas and Upaniṣads, the Smṛtis, Āgamas and the Purāṇas, and more than all, in the living current of influence carried on by the exemplary lives and sayings of the great Śaiva saints and teachers. It may suffice for the present to say that the spirit of these authorities, and of the lives and teachings of the great saints, is as much a live wire to-day in the Vīraśaiva religion, as healthy, as fresh, as vigorous and potent as it was in the days of yore; and that its strong and healthy faith in a purely religious solution for the main problems of existence, its thoroughly practical outlook of life in dealing with human and social values in relation to the final goal, its symbolisms which keep the individual in touch with his God and never allow him to sverve away from his only path to salvation, in whatever walks, avocations or worldly pursuits he may be engaged in and, more than all, its cheerful and enthusiastic bearing in the God's best of possible worlds—the world of action which it looks upon as a hard reality where you have got to exist and fight every inch of your way to the goal—these broad principles have given it a noble place among the great religious systems of the world.

Tradition ascribes the first teachings of the fundamental tenets of Viraśaiva religion to the five great religious

teachers—Renuka, Dāruka, Ghantākarṇa, Dhenukarṇa and Viśvakarṇa who were the earthly manifestations of the five aspects of the Supreme Lord—Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa and Īśana. It is averse to ascribe any temporal beginnings like the assigning of chronological dates to these great *Ācāryas* as it is believed that they incarnate from age to age in order to propound the great principles of the eternal religion contained in the Vedas and Upaniṣads, amplified in the Śaivāgamas and illustrated in the Śaiva Purānas. They incarnated in this iron age of *Kali* as Revaṇa Siddha, Marula Siddha, Ekorāmāradhya, Panditārādhya, and Viśvārādhya who are believed to have proceeded from the five symbols of *Paraśiva* corresponding to His five aspects noticed before. The *Svāyambhuva Āgama* gives an account of the incarnation of these great teachers of religion, known as the *Pañcācāryas* who were the very first teachers, if not the founders, of the Vīraśaiva faith. The *five great seats founded by these teachers in different* parts of India are the centres of the Vīraśaiva religion and theology as well as the visible symbols of not only the perpetuation of the eternal religion of the ancient Śaiva cult but also of the essential unity of all the different schools of thought among the Vīraśaivas in different parts of India. These great religious seats—Kedār in the Himālayas, Ujjaini in the South, Śrīśailam in the East, Rambhāpuri in the West and Benares in the North—have all been very richly endowed by great kings and chiefs at different periods of history and it is particularly interesting to note that not only these endowments have continued down to the present day, but that they were tolerated, nay even protected and added to, by the Mussalman conquerors of India during

the scarlet days of Hindu religious institutions. We find an endowment created and donated by means of an inscription by the Emperor Humayun in favour of the seat at Benares, and this munificence has been reverently recognised and honoured by Akbar and Jehangir. Their successors Shah Jahan and the Emperor Alamgir have both made very rich endowments in favour of this ancient seat of religion and their gift deeds are available today. Other instances of endowments by kings, chiefs, and public and private institutions are too numerous to record here and to mention even those as are of importance from the point of chronology, would take a good deal of space. Our point, however, in noticing these religious seats and the sort of recognition and respect they have enjoyed all through history, is to stress that the religious importance and influence that these five great seats enjoy, are due not so much to the loyalty and religious zeal of the votaries of this faith in different parts of the country, as to the greatness and intrinsic merit of this comprehensive religious system as well as to the exemplary spiritual leading that the notable teachers of these seats have been giving to the world at large.

It has been noticed at the begining that how Śaivism as the main outward expression of the Hindu religious feeling was able to withstand the onslaughts of strong Buddhistic and atheistic influences as also to prevent the disintegration of the Hindu religion of the Upaniṣads. It is needless to say that it was able to do this, mainly because it was speaking with the authority of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, the infalliable truths of which, the Hindu believed, that his religion was upholding. Śaivism preserved the eternal truths and the gods of his Vedas, the highest

philosophical knowledge of his Upaniṣads, the rigid economic integrity of the social order by preserving its caste systems and traditional customary laws and practices, and at the same time gave him the practical religion he needed, drawing its inspiration from all the accepted sources of religious experience. And Vīraśaivism which is the legitimate continuation of this ancient philosophical religion has preserved and continued all the characteristics of this ancient faith, though the play of temporal forces have from time to time given rise to internal differences in tenets, views and practices which are bound to arise in any system with such a long history. Vīraśaivism therefore accepts the eternal authority of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, of the Śaiva Āgamas, which adapt these truths for religious and secular practice, of the Purāṇas and Itihāsas which illustrate the working of these eternal truths. The system recognises the prescribed duties of the different social orders and castes as the means for securing harmony in the secular as well as spiritual lives of the individuals and in accordance with these precepts works out a thoroughly practical and nevertheless rational religious and ethical code of duties for its votaries, basing the religion on a strong philosophical foundation which has stood the test of ages amidst varying degrees of adverse influence of thought and religious beliefs.

Before proceeding to examine the position of the Vīraśaiva system in detail, it is worth our while noting two distinctive features of this system in its two aspects—philosophical and religious.

The highest Philosophical Absolute in Vīraśaivism is identified with Para Śiva the Supreme Brahman, who

is the one real Absolute without a second and who stands self-revealed as supported by all the authorities—*Śrutis, Āgamas, Purāṇas Itihāsas* and the record of revelations to the great seers and saints. This Absolute Para Śiva is characterised by the subtle principle of Sakti or Power, which inseperably inheres in Him forming his essential nature. Thus Paraśiva with His essence as Śakti is the ultimate Reality to be known, experienced and attained by the individual in quest.

In its religious aspect, the distinguishing feature of this system is the sign or symbol of the Supreme Being known as Liṅga which is the visible aspect of the God of religion. The need for worship and wearing of the symbol in the vital centres of the body is established and elaborately proved on the authortity of Śrutis, Smṛtis and the teachings of great sages and teachers. This symbolical application of the main philosophic truths to man's religious and ethical needs has been most convincingly carried on by evolving a thoroughly practical code of religious and moral principles and practices. Leaving the religious aspect alone for the present, it is proposed to dwell here briefly on the main position of Vīraśaivism as a system of philosophy.

Naganuru Brihanmathadhyaksha

PANDIT SRI KASHINATHA SHASTRIJI

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONGRESS AT MYSORE

on the 2nd of April 1935.

BY

PANDIT KASHINATHA SHASTRI,

PRESIDENT OF THE BRUHANMATHA AT NAGANUR.

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I deem it a rare privilege and honour to address this distinguished gathering of scholars and Philosophers assembled here, on the great philosophical system known as Śakti-viśiṣṭādvaita, dwelling briefly on the fundamental philosophical foundations of the great Vīraśaiva religion, which traces its antiquity far back into the Vedas and Upaniṣads. The Śaiva-āgamas [1] declare that the main principles of this religion have been taught in every age by the five great teachers known as

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[1] The authoritative Śaivāgamas are considered to be twenty-eight in number—the series beginning with *Kāmika* and ending with *Vātula*. They are, according to a text of *Vīrāgama*, of equal authority with the Vedas on account of their common standpoint with the latter. "सर्ववेदेषु यद्दृष्टं तत्सर्वं तु शिवागमे ।"

the Panchāchāryas,[2] who are believed to have proceeded from the five aspects of the supreme Śiva, who inspired them to establish in the world of human beings, the grand doctrines of this faith. The five great religious seats of Rambhāpuri, Ujjain, Kedār, Śriśailam and Benares, founded by these teachers in different parts of India, perpetuate their immortal names and remain, to this day, the very vital centres of the spirit of Vīraśaiva religion and philosophy. And it is these five great teachers that, in response to the divine inspiration, first propounded and then elaborated in their commentaries on *Śiva Sūtras*, the system of Śakti-Viśiṣṭādvaita, the main principles of which constitute the essence of the body of teachings contained in the Śrutis and Āgamas.

The term Śakti-Viśiṣṭādvaita means the non-duality of relationship between the individual soul and the supreme spirit both of which are characterised by *Śakti*. The compound,[3] when split, literally means " Between the soul and the Lord, each qualified by *Śakti*, there is no duality (of relationship)."

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[2] *Reṇukāchārya, Dārukāchārya, Ekorāmārādhya, Paṇḍitārādhya and Viśvārādhya.*

[3] "शक्तिश्च शक्तिश्च शक्ती-ताभ्यां विशिष्टौ जीवेशौ-तयोः अद्वैतं शक्तिविशिष्टाद्वैतं"

Śakti-Viśiṣṭādvaita is therefore, that system of philosophy which seeks to establish the inseperable unity of the individual soul with the supreme spirit both of which are charactrised by an inherent and inseperable power called Śakti. Souls endowed with power, find their ultimate rest in the Supreme Being, whose essential nature is an inherent and inseperable Śakti, which is the primordial power of life and expression subsisting in Him. Since the souls derive their existence entirely from the supreme spirit, and in the ultimate analysis, coalesce into his being, there is, in the result, only one Absolute and that, withot a second. Thus, while the non-dual relationship (*advaitam*) between the world of souls and Brahman, the supreme spirit, is maintained in one aspect, the distinction of an inherent Śakti, (*Śaktivaiśiṣṭya*) constituting the essence of their nature, is stressed in the other. Therefore, it is said that the Absolute and the individual souls are, in the final analysis, identical, and that the ultimate reality is the one and only Paraśiva Brahman with the distinction of Śakti which constitutes the essence of His being; and this is why this system of philosophy is known as Śakti-Viśiṣṭādvaita or non-dualism with the distinction of Śakti.

Śakti which is intelligent (*cit*) as well as unintelligent (*acit*), is differentiated as gross (*sthūla*) and subtle (*sūkṣma*). In her gross state she characterises the souls while she abides in the supreme spirit in her subtle state. Her gross intelligent aspect (*Sthūla-cit-Śakti*) constitutes the imperfect finite consciousness (*kiñcidjñatā rūpa*) of the individual souls, while the gross unintelligent aspect (*sthūla-acit-Śakti*) constitutes their imperfect and limited power of action (*kiñcit-kartṛtā rūpa*). Her subtle intelligent aspect (*sūkṣma cit-śakti*) is the perfect, infinite and all-knowing universal conciousness (*sarvajñatā-rūpa*) of the Supreme Being, while her subtle unintelligent aspect (*sūkṣma-acit-śakti*) constitutes His perfect and limitless power of action (*sarva kartṛtā-rūpa*).

What then, is the nature of this principle called *Śakti* which appears to mark a fundamentally distinctive feature of this system ?

ŚAKTI

Śakti or Power is the attribute which is inseperably inherent in Paraśiva Brahman, the Absolute, constituting His essential nature. The core of the Vīraśaiva system of philosophy consists in expounding the one ultimate Entity whose essential

distinction is an inherent power, inseperably subsisting in it as an attribute. This attribute, on account of its inseperable existence in the substance, is considered to be as eternal (*nitya*) in its nature as the substance itself. There is overwhelming evidence in the Śrutis to support the view that Śakti abides eternally in Brahman as his essential quality. *Śvetaśvatara* states 'this primordial Śakti, which we hear manifest in diverse forms, is of the essence of His nature (*Svābhāvikī*) and appears diversely as knowledge, power and action.'[4] The same Śruti opines that this Śakti is so subtle that she eludes our finite comprehension and is seen only by those who have equipped themselves with the highest intuitive powers born of meditation and that she is innate in the supreme being, who stands alone, transcending all that is created and conditioned by space, time, and causation.[5] According to the same authority 'this eternal and primordial (*Purāṇī*) Energy, in her aspect of supreme consciousness, (*Prajñā*) expands herself (*Prasṛtā*) in manifold

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[4] परास्य शक्तिर्विविधैव श्रूयते स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबल क्रिया च ॥ (६.८)

[5] ते ध्यानयोगानुगता अपश्यन् देवात्मशक्तिं स्वगुणै र्निगूढां । यः कारणानि निखिलानि तानि कालात्मयुक्तान्यधि तिष्ठत्येकः॥ (१-३)

forms, as power of action and the like.[6] The etymological meaning of the word *māyā* in the same Śruti [7] suggests that the word indicates, not the primordial nescience or ignorance as the non-dualists (*advaitins*) would assert, but the distinctive and discriminating aspect of Śakti, by virtue of which, she becomes the ultimate creative principle, evolving herself into the phenomenal universe. For, *Siddhāntāgama* explains the word *māyā* to mean that which naturally attains to and eternally abides in the supreme Brahman.[8] In other words, *māyā* of the *Śvetāśvatara* is only the creative aspect of the eternal power residing in the supreme being.

In the *Yajurveda* (*Taittirīya Saṁhitā*) we find references to Rudra always as being associated with his Śakti in the form of Ambikā or Umā, and never without her.[9] The same idea of inseperable

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[6] तदक्षरं तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं प्रज्ञा च तस्मात् प्रसृता पुराणी ॥ (४-१८)

[7] मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरं ।
तस्यावयवभूतैस्तु व्याप्तं सर्वमिदं जगत् ॥ (४ १०)

[8] मं शिवं परमं ब्रह्म प्राप्नोतीति स्वभावतः ।
मायेति प्रोच्यते लोके ब्रह्मनिष्ठा सनातनी ॥

[9] आखुस्ते रुद्र पशुस्तं जुषस्वैष ते रुद्रभागः सह स्वस्राऽम्बिकया तं जुषस्व ॥ (१·८·९)

नमः सोमाय च रुद्राय च । (४·५·८)

unity of Siva and Sakti is stressed in the *Kaivalya Śruti*, wich gives a glorious description of the Supreme Being, who, with the association of Umā or Sakti, as His inseperable consort, is the origin and end of all creation, the one, sublime, all-pervading, omniscient Lord, beyond the Blue, whose nature is supreme consciousness and bliss.[10] It is this idea of essential and inseperable unity of Siva and Sakti that is sought to be emphasised by the simile of a word and its concept (*vāgarthāviva*),[11] used by the immortal poet, Kālidāsa, in the benedictive verse to his famous epic, Raghuvaṁśa.

It is thus seen that the relationship which exists between Para-Siva, the absolute, and Sakti, His power, is one of inseperable unity, like that of a substance and its attribute, and that this inherent power is as eternal and real as the supreme reality itself. Or, as *Mṛtyuñjaya*

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[10] तमादिमध्यांतविहीनमेकं विभुं चिदानंदमरूपमद्भुतं । उमासहायं परमेश्वरं प्रभुं त्रिलोचनं नीलकंठं प्रशान्तम् ॥ ध्यात्वा मुनिर्गच्छति भूतयोनिं समस्तसाक्षिं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ (१-७)

[11] वागर्थाविव संपृक्तौ वागर्थप्रतिपत्तये ।
जगतः पितरौ वन्दे पार्वतीपरमेश्वरौ ॥

Bhattāraka[12] explains, 'Even as the essential qualities of light and heat inhere in the Sun and the Fire by virtue of their own nature, and are inseperably associated with the ideas of their substrata, the Śakti of Śiva inheres in Him eternally and inseperably (*Aviyuktā*) by virtue of His nature (*Svabhāvajā*), and the same supreme Śaktī, in her causal state, is the subtle but potent principle at the root of the entire material universe'

It is not however to be supposed that the relation of inseperable unity (*avinā bhāva*) existing between Śakti and Śiva, connotes the idea of indistinguishable identity or merger, such as the non-dualist would suggest. It is the oneness of the substance and its essential attribute, the latter having the relation of a subsisting quality to the former, and as such, bearing a metaphysical distinction. For, in the Vīraśaiva system, Śakti and the substance characterised by Śakti, are thought of as one entity, connoting both identity and difference. Thus the *Kūrma Purāṇa*, emphasising this simultaneous difference and non-difference, says—'This Śakti is the attribute and Śiva is the

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[12] सा ममेच्छा पराशक्तिरवियुक्ता स्वभावजा ।
वह्हेरूष्मेव विज्ञेया रश्मिरूपा रवेरिव ॥
सर्वस्य जगतो चापि सा शक्तिः कारणात्मिका ॥

substance possessed of this attribute; and the sages, therefore, make a metaphysical distinction between the two, while the yogins see Reality as a whole.'[13]

The special feature of the Vīraśaiva system is that it views the ultimate reality as a determinate entity (*sa-viśeṣa*), with Śakti or Power as its distinctive attribute,[14] and it is only on account of its determinate nature that the Supreme Brahman can be thought of as the cause of the phenomenal universe with its entire organic and inorganic creation. Since Para-Śiva-with-Śakti, constitutes the material cause of the universe, we find that

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[13] एषा शक्तिः शिवा ह्येतच्छक्तिमानुच्यते शिवः ।
शक्तिशक्तिमतोर्भेदं वदन्ति परमार्थतः ॥
अभेदं चानुपश्यन्ति योगिनस्तत्त्वचिंतकाः ॥

[14] A logical distinction between Brahman and its attribute becomes a metaphysical necessity, though the existence of the attribute depends on, and is determined by, the one ultimate substance which is its support. Hence, this system, while striving to preserve the one-ness of the ultimate reality, sees the logic of admitting a difference, though not in itself, yet as an aspect of reality. It is for this reason that the system is known to have been based on the doctrine of *bhedābheda* (difference and non-difference), and in view of the determinate aspect of the reality, it is also called *Viśeṣādvaita* (attributive non-dualism) or non-dualism with a difference.

some aspect of this Śakti characterises every known species of the material world in a special way. However imperfect, insignificant or impotent may be the expression of this power, it subsists in every species as its special Śakti or property, which marks it with a distinct peculiarity of its own. The five gross elements viz earth, water, fire, air and ether are each characterised by its own special power manifesting in its capacity to support, to quench, to burn, to vibrate or to pervade respectively. The self in the individuals is characterised by its power of intelligence and consciousness. Similarly, the special capacity of the plant-life for drawing in water and food material from the earth and air, the burning, cooking and transforming properties of fire, the special virtue of some herbs and minerals for curing ailments, the power of mercury to transform copper into gold, the peculiar force of resistance natural to some minerals like diamond, the special instinct of ants, by virtue of which they are able to cognise the fruits on the top of a tree by merely smelling at the roots, the capacity on the part of a certain species of monkeys to detect poison, and the power of a camel to attract reptiles by the mere force of its breath,—these are some of the common instances of the

manifestation of Śakti in the objects of the phenomenal world. It is thus within our common experience to infer that every form of moving and non-moving creation in the universe is endowed with some aspect of Śakti or Power and that the cause, out of which it proceeds, must necessarily be endowed with a greater Śakti in order that it might give rise to such a creation.[15]

Śakti, thus inherent in Brahman, partakes of His own triple nature of Being, Intelligence and Bliss. Out of His will, she assumes His nature and becomes the primordial creative power operating in the evolution of the material world.[16]

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[15] It is interesting to note that the tendency of the modern physical science, appears to be to arrive nearer and nearer, every day, to our conclusion viz that the entire phenomenal universe is a manifestation of the supreme energy inherent in the ultimate reality. The reduction of the gross material universe into an ultimate, electrically-charged particles called electrons and protons, leaves nothing more by way of a barrier between matter and energy, which latter, in the language of the Vīraśaiva philosophers, is an aspect of the ultimate creative principle called Śakti.

[16] तदीया परमा शक्तिः सच्चिदानंदलक्षणा ।
समस्तलोकनिर्माणसमवायस्वरूपिणी ॥
तदिच्छयाऽभवत्साक्षात्तत्स्वरूपानुकारिणी ॥१२॥
(सिद्धान्तशिखामणि. परिच्छेद २)

When she assumes the creative aspect, she becomes known as the discriminative power of the Supreme Being (*Vimarśākhyā*), and abiding in Him, she becomes virtually the source of the entire creation. She is also the eternal light and expression, vivifying the whole universe and as such, abides in Him even as the moon-light abides in the moon. This *vimarśa* aspect of Śakti, residing in the supreme spirit, has therefore two states, viz that of the supreme consciousness which illumines the entire creation, and that of the creative principle which contains the whole universe in embrayo, and thus becomes mainly responsible for the manifestation and dissolution of the universe of souls and matter.[17]

The creative aspect of Śakti is called *vimarśa* or discrimination for this reason that the very first movement of Śakti is the effect of self-expression

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[17] विमर्शाख्या पराशक्तिर्विश्ववैचित्र्यकारिणी ।
यस्मिन् प्रतिष्ठिता ब्रह्म तदिदं विश्वभाजनं ॥३१॥

यथा चंद्रे स्थिरा ज्योत्स्ना विश्ववस्तुप्रकाशिनी ।
तथा शक्तिर्विमर्शाख्या प्रकाशे ब्रह्मणि स्थिरा ॥३२॥

अंतःकरणरूपेण जगदंकुररूपतः ।
यस्मिन् विभाति चिच्छक्तिर्ब्रह्मभूतः स उच्यते ॥३६॥

(सि. शि. परिच्छेद २०)

on the part of the supreme Brahman. This first self-expression constitutes Brahman's experience—a discriminative experience—of His own triple nature, viz. that He is, that He is conscious and that He is blissful. This is the first spontaneous vibration of the supreme consciousness towards a discriminative experience of His own nature, and thus constitutes the very first movement of Śakti towards evolution. In other words, since consciousness includes experience, Brahman, the supreme consciousness, must be aware of His own nature and this awareness constitutes the first movement of the supreme Śakti—the first vibration disturbing the equillibrium of quiescence; and this first spontaneous vibration of Brahman's Śakti is known as *vimarśa*. In other words, *vimarśa* is Śakti-become-discriminative or active.[18]

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[18] This aspect of *Śakti* must be specially emphasised here, because it is virtually the ultimate principle to which all evolution must be traced. The ever-changing phenomenal world, and the process of evolution itself, find a more satisfactory explanation in this principle than is to be found in many other systems. *Vimarśa* which is defined as the "spontaneous vibration of the ultimate reality" is the connecting link as it were, between the absolute and the world of distinctions to which she gives rise. She is the latent energy subsisting in the Supreme Being; though by herself, she is of the nature of consciousness, she passes

This discriminative Śakti, still characterising the supreme spirit, resides in Him eternally in a subtle state in both her intelligent and unintelligent aspects.[10] Śakti as intelligent, constitutes the

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over to the objective reality in her formative aspect, and becomes the potential principle, projecting the entire objective universe at the stage of creation and withdrawing it into herself at the stage of dissolution. She is not the unconscious *Prakṛti* of the *Sāṁkhyas*, oblivious to and unconcerned with the ends of the world-process. She is intelligent—the very principle of universal life, energy and expression; she is the main instrument of the Supreme Being in His cosmic expression of the triple aspects of His nature viz Will, Knowdge and Action. Śakti or Energy is latent in Brahman in the state of quiescence, and the whole universe abides in her in a potential state. When she responds to the spontaneous vibration of the supreme consciousness expressing the supreme will, she is said to be in action when the evolution and the world process set in. It is she that undergoes change with all the manifold distinctions, changes and effects of the evolution, and it is also she that, at the end of the cosmic process, finds her ultimate rest in the supreme reality, assuming her original state. Thus, whether in the state of action or in the state of rest, she always abides in the Supreme Being as a permanent, inseperable and yet distinctive attribute, deriving her nature, existence and explanation entirely from the supreme reality—Para Śiva Brahman.

[10] That this *Vimarśa* exists in Paraśiva Brahman in the form of subtle intelligent and non-intelligent Energy (*Sūkṣma cit-acit-ātmaka Śakti*), is seen before.

primordial Ego or self-sense, as it is Brahman's experience of his own triple nature; and in her unintelligent aspect she constitutes the primordial creative principle, becoming the material cause of the universe-to-evolve. In this latter aspect, the entire phenomenal world, with all its manifold varieties and distinctions, exists in her in a subtle but potential state, even as the different organs with the variegated colours of the would-be-peacock, exist with all their manifold distinctions in a rudimentary state, within the fluid embrayo of the egg.[20]

When the process of cosmic evolution sets in, *vimarśa* or the discriminative energy gets conscious of her own nature and distinctions, and assumes the three qualitative moments of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*[21]. With part of the pure consciousness of her perfect creative faculty, she evolves the *sāttvic* power of *vidyā* or knowledge; with part of the creative principle, proceeding from the conciousness of her perfect knowledge, she evolves the *rājasic* energy which is a mixture of *sattva* and *tamas*

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[20] '*Mayūrānda-rasa-nyāya*'—a maxim used to Illustrate this potential creative principle.

[21] गुणत्रयात्मिका शक्तिर्ब्रह्मनिष्ठा सनातनी ॥२६॥

(सि. शि. परिच्छेद ५)

elements. Though in the original state, knowledge and action are identical as being related through the same substratum, yet in the process of evolution, the power of knowledge and the power of action, become so distinct from each other that the idea of their distinction, viz that knowledge cannot become action and action cannot become knowledge, gives rise to the consciousness of difference, constituting the *tāmasic* energy.

This *tāmasic* energy is known as *māyā* and is unintelligent. Even as the sun's rays, falling on a crystal, and thrown back by a reflctive process on a piece of cotton by the side, assume the form of fire, Śiva's power of *Vimarśa* enters the unconscious *māyā* by a reflective process(*prati-sphuraṇa gati*) and evolves itself into *prakṛti* which, with its triple quality of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, becomes the source of all pleasure and pain, desire and attachment. In the Vīraśaiva system, this *prakṛti* is termed as *citta* or finite intelligence. *Citta* is the characteristic attribute of the individual soul which is a part of the supreme consciousness of Śiva. In otherwords, soul is a part of the supreme consciousness of Śiva, expressing itself through the power of *vimarśa* in the form of finite intelligence abiding unconscious matter.

JĪVA

or

The Individual Soul

Jīva or the Soul is a fraction of Śiva and is of His nature but is differentiated on account of ignorance.[22] The same idea is contained in the aphorism '*amśo nānā vyapadeśāt*' Explaining this idea, *Mundaka* says " Even as the sparks spring in thousands of forms from a great fire, the souls innumerable, spring from Brahman in his own essence and find their ultimate rest in him only."[23]

In the Vīraśaiva system, Śiva and the souls are neither entirely different and distinct entities, nor can it be said that they are entirely identical and one. For, metaphysically they can be viewd both as distinct and as indentical even like the sparks from the fire, which are neither entirely different from the mother fire, nor could thcy be said to be the same as fire. Souls are identical with Brahman in the sense that they proceed from

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[22] अनाद्यविद्यासंबंधात्तदंशो जीवनामकः ॥३४॥

(सि. शि. परिच्छेद ५)

[23] यथा सुदीप्तात् पावकात् विस्फुलिंगाः सहस्रशः प्रभवंते सरूपाः । तथाऽक्षराद्विविधाः सोम्य भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापियन्ति ॥ (२-१-१)

Brahman partaking of the same essence, that they find an ultimate rest in Him, and that apart from Him they have no real or independent existence, as they ultimately become one with Him. They are distinct from Him in the sense that though they partake of the nature of Śiva, they are devoid of His all-knowing and all-accomplishing powers, His all-pervading supreme consciousness and omnipresence. Their consciousness, knowledge and power of action are finite and imperfect, and they are subject to taints of finitude, *karma* and *māyā*, as also to births and deaths, pleasure and pain. Yet they are not entirely distinct from Him in the way that the unconscious material world is different from Him. For, unlike the material world, they are endowed with consciousness and powers of volition and action, and they enjoy the supreme bliss in community with Him. The spark springing from the fire, has all the characteristic essence of the fire such as light, heat and energy; but has these, only to such an imperfect extent as you will not be able to employ it for the purposes to be accomplished with the great fire. And so, when you say that the spark is the same as the fire, you admit their identical relationship in one aspect while you differentiate them in another. Similarly, in the case of Jīva and the Supreme Spirit, you admit two aspects of the same relationship—identity and difference. It is

for this reason that the philosophers of this system apply what is known as the doctrine of *bhedābheda* or simultaneous difference and non-difference, in viewing the relationship between the individual soul and the supreme spirit; and on account of this, the system is often characterised as *dvaitādvaita* or dualism and non-dualism. The teachers of this system, as all the true followers of the vedic religions ought to be, are obliged to the task of reconciling the apparent conflicts in the equally authoritative dualistic and non-dualistic texts of the Śruti[24] by finding out the most rational way of explanation for them; and they consequently consider that the doctrine of *bhedābheda* offers the best and the most convincing explanation for all such conflicts. As Śripati, the great Vīraśaiva commentator on the *Brahma Sūtras* says, ' It is only according to the Vīraśaiva system, which applies the doctrine of identity as well as difference, that a proper and cogent explanation can be found for all the authoritative Śruti-texts bearing on the problem of Reality.'[25]

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[24] Such as ' द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ' etc., of the dualistic import; ' अहं ब्रह्मास्मि ' ' नेह नानास्ति किंचन ' and the like of the non-dualistic import.

[25] द्वैताद्वैतमते शुद्धे विशेषाद्वैतसंज्ञके ।
वीरशैवैकसिद्धान्ते सर्वश्रुतिसमन्वयः ॥

The power of *vimarśa* which, as we have noticed before, resides inseperably in supreme Śiva, evolves itself into three distinct forms viz the enjoyer, (*bhoktṛ*) the objects of enjoyment (*bhojya*) and the inducer (*preraka*), according to the interplay of the three qualitative forces of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The individual consciousness with elements of *sattva* and *rajas* becomes the enjoyer. (*bhoktṛ*). The conscious matter conditioned by an entirety of *tāmasic* force, constitutes the objects of enjoyment catering to the senses of taste and the like. The supreme consciousness characterised by an entirety of *sāttvic* elements constitutes the Supreme Lord *Maheśwara*, the inducer (*preraka*). The conditioning principle itself is called *māyā*.

Māyā is a condition or a limiting adjunct which has two aspects—the higher and the lower. The higher *māyā* (*ūrdhvamāyā*) which is pure, is an adjunct of Śiva but cannot bind or limit Him in any way. The lower *māyā* (*adho-māyā*), which is impure and therefore a taint, is what is called *avidyā* or ignorance, and is the limiting adjunct of the individual soul. It is also called *prakṛti* or gross matter. On account of the varying degrees of the force and influence of ignorance (*avidyā*), souls are of varying nature. The soul, in the grip of

ignorance, gets farther and farther away from the consciousness of his identity with the Supreme Spirit. Though he is himself of the nature and essence of Śiva, he becomes woefully limited and imperfect in his knowledge, energy and power of action ; and, deluded by the ignorance born of endless *karma*, he loses the knowledge of his oneness with the supreme spirit and becomes entangled in a mesh of *saṁsāra*—the endless cycle of births and deaths—and thus becomes fettered to matter. But the soul, by nature, is of the essence of the Supreme consciousness. Residing in the heart of the organic material body, though he is as subtle as a hundredth part of the tip of a hair,[20] he illumines and enlivens with his consciousness every part and corner of the organism, even as a tiny lamp brightens every corner of the room in which it is placed. Thus is he able to be aware of the pleasures and pains in any part of the material body. This atomic self, occupying the innermost recesses of the seat of consciousness in every living being, becomes, however, enveloped by the taints of finitude and other impurities, and gets

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[20] बालाग्रशतभागस्य शतधा कल्पितस्य च ।
भागो जीवः स विज्ञेयः स चानंत्याय कल्पते ॥
(श्वेताश्वतर ५-९)

himself entangled in a network of *karma* of his previous births. Though bodiless himself, he occupies the bodies enveloped by *māyā*, and revolves like a wheel in the endless worldly process of births and deaths. Himself bodiless, the soul should naturally have no attachment to body or matter; but being in touch with *ahamkāra* or self-sense (the ego), he develops a peculiar attachment towards the body in which he dwells for the time being, even as a pure crystal takes the red colour of the rose placed before it. As a fruit of ignorance and on account of the chains of *karma* growing stronger and stronger from birth to birth, he takes different bodies suitable to the nature of his *karma*, which however must wear out before he could be released finally. *Ātman* is neither god nor demon, neither human nor beastly, neither man nor woman. He simply takes the name and form of the body he temporarily resides in, and undergoes pleasure or pain peculiar to one or the other of the eight million and odd species of bodies, according to the nature of his *karma*, which conditions him to birth and death. The apparent interest he takes in the material body, is only due to the limiting conditions or *upādhis* like ignorance *karma* and *māyā*. When the conditions are removed he becomes his own.

But the complexity of the network of *karma* once created, becomes so confusedly knotty, that unless the grace of the Lord descends on him, his release from it becomes very difficult. It is the Supreme Lord that must come to his rescue and redeliverance. It is only by the grace of God that the soul, once caught in the web of life, could tear off the sheaths of three kinds of impurities, (*mala-traya*)[27] and thus realising his own nature, could feel his identity with the Supreme Śiva and enjoy the supreme bliss in community with Him. How could the soul free himself from such a web of life, and find the grace of God and absolution, will be explained in another place.

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[27] The three kinds of impurities or taints (*mala*) referred to here, are those of *āṇava, karma* and *māyā*, which are the various degrees of limiting conditions binding the soul to the wheel of life. Freedom from the bondage of endless births and deaths could be secured only when the soul purges itself off these three layers of impurities. The *āṇava mala* is the taint of ignorance due to the soul imagining itself to be finite and bound to the body ; this false notion limits or clouds the intelligence, causing ignorance, which is the source of all error. For, the soul, being under the influence of this false notion of finitude, feels itself imperfect and limited in power, and gradually comes to identify itself with the gross material body which it inhabits. This is the first layer as it were of the impurity enveloping the soul, and could be destroyed only by true knowledge,

PARA-ŚIVA

The Supreme Brahman.

The supreme reality is Brahman which is termed as *Para-Śiva* in this system. *Para-Śiva* is the only, absolute, eternal, uncaused reality, in whom the entire creation of souls and matter finds its existence and explanation. His essential nature is Being, Consciousness and Bliss; He has neither beginning nor end, neither a compeer nor a second. He is all power, all knowledge and all glory, endowed with the highest attributes. His

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which is the knowledge of identity of the self with the Supreme Reality. *Karma mala* or the impurity due to *karma*, causes the soul to take new bodies and subjects it to the endless cycle of births and deaths with all its incidents. *Karma* can destroy itself only by gradual wearing out and by no other means excepting by the grace of the Lord. *Māyā mala*, the basis of all other impurities and taints, is the source of all desires and attachments and the consequent miseries, pains and sufferings that the soul undergoes in the material body. It is the gross, dense ignorance, and it makes the soul mistake the unreals for reals and to cling passionately to the material world and its sense-objects. This is the outer layer of impurity and could be destroyed only through a well-disciplined religious and ethical life, by means of which the soul is brought nearer and nearer to realising its own nature and working its way for salvation.

supreme consciousness comprehends all; His supreme will is unrestricted and independent. He is the uncaused ultimate cause (*parama kāraṇa*) of all that exists, the entire universe of souls and matter being only a projection of the mere force of His will (*sva śakti pracaya*). His own inherent power reflects His consciousness as souls, while the same power, in another aspect constitutes the objects of the material universe for their experience, and the same power, also in a different aspect, remains the prompting cause or the inducer that directs the actions of the souls. As the underlying Reality of the entire universe, and without Himself undergoing any change, He, out of His mere will, directs his Śakti, the inherent power, to assume different aspects, and operates through her as the material as well as the instrumental cause of the phenomenal universe. The whole world of matter exists in Him in the form of His energy in a subtle and potential state, until out of His will, the equilibrium of the state of quiescence is agitated and the evolution of the universe begins. That which already existed unmanifest in the form of subtle potentiality, becomes manifest when projected, and this is what is called creation (*sarga* or *sṛṣṭi*); and when the manifest gross universe is dissolved into its original

rudiments, we have what is called *pralaya* or dissolution.

Brahman has no limiting adjuncts as the souls have. He is perfect and remains unaffected by the changing processes of the evolution or by the pleasures and pains that the souls undergo. Nor is he bound by the laws of *karma* or *māyā*, as even these are subject to the control of the power of his will. Even the higher state of *māyā* (*ūrdhva-māyā*) which is only an aspect of his Śakti, is only an instrument of his creative energy and does not affect him. As he is both the immanent and the transcendent cause of the changing universe of matter, he remains unaffected by the evolutionary process.

In His aspect of supreme personality, *Para Śiva* is infinite mercy and grace. Through His Śakti He evolves Himself to be ever near His devotees and to save the erring souls. He has limitless compassion and His very nature indicates auspicious blessing. This is why he is known to *Vedas*, the *āgamas* and the seers as *Para Śiva* or the Supreme Blessing. The *Kaivalya Śruti* describes Him thus: "Without beginning or end, He is the eternal, all pervading, one Reality whose nature is supreme consciousness and bliss. The wise contemplate Him as the sublime, blue-

throated, three-eyed Lord beyond the Dark, ever united with Umā (His Śakti), and as the origin and end of all creation, and the eternal seer of all actions."[28] To attain Him is the goal; to feel one in His nature and enjoy the supreme bliss in eternal community with Him, to merge into His being—this is the real end of all the souls.

THE MEANS of KNOWLEDGE.

The Vīraśaiva Philosophers accept perception, inference and scriptural testimony as the only three valid sources of knowledge. The *cārvāka* materialists rely on sense perception only, while the Buddhists and the *vaiśeṣika* pluralists accept perception as well as inference as vaild sources. The *sāṁkhyas* maintain that scriptural authority is also a necessary source while the logicians of the *nyāya* school lead by Udayana, add comparison (*upamāna*) to the list as an independent source of

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[28] तमादिमध्यान्तविहीनमेकं विभुं चिदानन्दमरूपमद्भुतम् ।
उमासहायं परमेश्वरं प्रभुं त्रिलोचनं नीलकंठं प्रशान्तम् ॥
ध्यात्वा मुनिर्गच्छति भूतयोनिं समस्तसाक्षिं तमसःपरस्तात् ॥
(१-७)

knowledge. The *Prābhākara* school would have one more source which they call *arthāpatti* or implication, while the advaitins accept non-perception (*anupalabdhi*) as a distinct means of knowledge. The traditionists of the *Purāṇa* and *Itihāsa* schools add subsumption or origination, (*sambhava*) and tradition (*aitihya*) to the list, thus making in all, eight valid and independent sources of knowledge. The Vīraśaiva school, however, maintains that the latter five are not independent means of knowledge as they could be brought under one or the other of the three main heads—perception, inference and scriptural authority. Thus, what is called *anupalabdhi* or non-apprehension, is not a distinct source from perception and as such must be included under that head, while comparison, implication and subsumption or origination are only the variations of inferential knowledge and as such find their place under inference. Tradition, if it contains the sanction of authority, is not different from scriptural testimony ; and if it does not, it need not be considered at all as a valid source of knowledge. Of the mechanism of knowledge, and the stages of the actual thought process from sense perception to the cognitive processes of the intellect and the experiencing self, I have neither time nor place to elaborate in this short thesis.

EVOLUTION of MATTER,
and the
REALITY of the MATERIAL WORLD.

The Vīraśaiva philosophers consider that the entire universe of the moving and non-moving creation evolves out of *Para-Śiva* characterised by His Śakti, and that it is a real entity and not an illusion. The *Śrutis* and the *āgamas* proclaim that Śiva with Śakti, Himself appears in the manifold forms of his creation. *Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi* tells us that " just as a fold of cloth spreads itself in all directions into what is called a tent, Śiva by the expansion of Śakti inhering in Him, appears as what is known as the universe." " Even as a tree spreads itself in manifold forms as boughs, twigs, leaves, flowers and fruits, the one and only Śiva spreads Himself in the form of the material world." " Even as a great banyan tree with all its huge branches, leaves and fruits, exists latent in the tiny seed, this entire creation with all its wonderful variations, lies dormant in the heart of Brahman."[29]

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[29] आत्मशक्तिविकासेन शिवो विश्वात्मना स्थितः ।
कुटीभावाद्यथा भाति पटः स्वस्य प्रसारणात् ॥६५॥
पत्रशाखादिरूपेण यथा तिष्ठति पादपः ।
तथा भूम्यादिरूपेण शिव एको विराजते ॥६६॥
(परिच्छेद १०)

The *Śiva-Sūtra* speaks to the same effect when it says " this universe is the expansion of His power."[30] The *sarvamangalā* declares " Of the two real entities viz Śakti, and the One with Śakti, the former appears in the form of the whole universe, while the latter is the Supreme Lord *maheśvara*,"[31] and the *chāndogya* supports this view declaring " I become many."[32]

Mundaka makes use of the famous simile of the spider and the web to the effect that even as a spider spins her web out of herself,[33] the *Para Brahman* (with Śakti) creates this universe, expanding his own essential energy, and draws it ultimately into himself. Thus, evolution is projection and manifestation of the universe, lying latent in Brahman, in the form of his Śakti. Even like a turtle which spreads out and draws in his limbs, the Supreme Brahman spreads out the

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[29] वृक्षस्थं पत्रपुष्पादि वटबीजस्थितं यथा ।
तथा हृदयबीजस्थं विश्वमेतत्परात्मनः ॥३६॥
(परिच्छेद २०)

[30] "स्वशक्तिप्रचयोऽस्य विश्वं" (३-३०)

[31] शक्तिश्च शक्तिमांश्चैव पदार्थद्वयमुच्यते ।
शक्तयोऽस्य जगत् कृत्स्नं शक्तिमांस्तु महेश्वरः ॥

[32] बहु स्यां प्रजायेय । (६-२-३)

[33] यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च । (१-१-७)

universe by the mere force of His will, and draws it in the end, into Himself. You could never say that the appearance of limbs out of the turtle was the creation of those limbs; nor could you assert that they were destroyed when they disappeared into his body. The limbs were all there complete, full and distinct, as real in their hidden state as when they appeared out. Similarly, the phenomenal universe with all its plurality and diversity exists as a real entity in Brahman, and its manifestation is not creation as also its dissolution is not destruction."[34]

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[34] The Vīraśaiva philosophers adopt the doctrine of *Satkārya vāda* in explaining the causal relation between Brahman and the finite world. The material universe, according to this doctrine, is the effect evolved out of a pre-existent material cause. For, Brahman with his inherent Śakti, constitutes both the material and the efficient cause of the universe of matter and souls. As Śakti has both the conscious and the non-conscious aspects, we could not ask how Śakti, which is of the nature of Śiva's consciousness, could evolve herself into the gross world of matter. Nor could we ask how Śiva, the material cause of the universe, could remain unchanged during the process of evolution. For it is really Śakti that, in her varying aspects, undergoes change. It is through her that Śiva becomes both the material and the efficient cause of the world, which is immanent in Him in the form of His inherent energy. But He is also transcendent and remains unaffected through the changes while Śakti goes through the evolutionary process to

This view of the reality of the phenomenal universe is amply supported by *Śrutis* and the *āgamas*. *Taittirīya* says that Brahman, out of his own desire (will), created in a subtle form the whole universe of the conscious and the unconscious, the moving and the non-moving, and that, entering himself into his creation, became the world; and that this world, which is Brahman-become, is real.[35] Reṇukācārya in *Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi*

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evolve herself into the material world. Through Śakti, which operates as the connecting principle between the world of finite reals and the supreme infinite reality without compromising the position of the latter, the Vīraśaiva philosophers seek to explain away the chief difficulty which besets all the monistic schools, whether absolute or qualified, viz the difficulty of finding a satisfactory explanation for the causal connection between the changeless, eternal absolute and the ever-changing finite world of souls and matter. Can a changing material world proceed from the one, absolute, changeless reality? Can such a reality undergo change without compromising its position as the absolute? We must seek to find an answer to these questions in the principle of Śakti, inherent in the Supreme Reality.

[35] सोऽकामयत । बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति । स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तप्त्वा । इदं सर्वमसृजत । यदिदं किञ्च । तत्सृष्ट्वा । तदेवानुप्राविशत् । तदनुप्रविश्य । सच्च त्यच्चाभवत् । निरुक्तं चानिरुक्तं च निलयनं चानिलयनं च । विज्ञानं चाविज्ञानं च । सत्यं चानृतं च सत्यमभवत् । यदिदं किञ्च । तत्सत्यमित्याचक्षते ॥ (आनन्दवल्ली ६).

explains that " this world consisting of the moving and the non-moving, proceeding as it does from the Supreme Lord, is not different from Him even as a jar is not different from the clay." " This world which proceeds from the very essence of Śivā, cannot be seperated or distinguished from Śiva even as the bubbles, foams, waves and the other variations of the ocean could not be distinguished (in their essence) from the ocean itself." " Even as there can be no distinction in the essential nature of the flowers and leaves from the nature of the tree itself, there can be no difference in nature between this moving and non-moving creation and Śiva, the supreme consciousness."[36] And therefore it is said that the universe of matter and souls evolved out of Brahman is a real entity, though its reality is to be explained only through Brahman in whom it exists as his inseperably subsisting Śakti.

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[36] यस्मादेतत् समुत्पन्नं महादेवाच्चराचरं ।
तस्मादेतन्न भिद्येत यथा कुम्भादिकं मृदः ॥६२॥
शिवतत्त्वात् समुत्पन्नं जगदस्मान्न भिद्यते ।
फेनोर्मिबुद्बुदाकारो यथा सिन्धोर्न भिद्यते ॥६३॥
(परिच्छेद १०)

यथा पुष्पपलाशादिर्वृक्षरूपान्न भिद्यते ।
तथा शिवात् पराकाशाज्जगतो नास्ति भिन्नता ॥७१॥
(परिच्छेद १९)

We have seen before that the spontaneous vibration of the inherent power of the Supreme Reality is, in its creative aspect, known as *vimarśa* or the power of discrimination, and that this discriminative aspect of Śakti constitutes the primordial creative principle which contains latent in itself all the potential rudiments of the universe-to-be-evolved with all their manifold distictions and diversities, even like a peacock's egg which contains all the distinctive particularities of the future bird, in a potential state. We will now see how the further vibration or agitation of this *vimarsa* or discriminative energy of the Supreme Being, gives rise to the evolution of the thirty-six principles or categories, underlying the phenomenal universe of matter and souls. They are in the order of their evolution, the principles called *Śiva, Śakti, Sadāśiva, Īśvara, Śuddhavidyā, māyā, kalā, vidyā, rāga, kāla, niyati, puruṣa, prakṛti, buddhi, ahaṁkāra, manas, śrotra, tvak, netra, jihvā, ghrāṇa, vāk, pāṇi, pāda, pāyu, upastha, śabda, sparśa, rūpa, rasa, gandha, ākāśa, vāyu, agni, jala* and *pṛthivī*.[37]

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[37] The five principles above *māyā* (*Śiva, Śakti, Sadāśiva Īśvara and Śuddha vidyā*) are the five transcendental categories which partake of the characteristic essence of the Supreme Spirit in as much as they are the expressions through His inherent energy, of His consciousness, bliss, will, knowledge and power of action. The remaining

THE PROCESS of EVOLUTION.

The *Chāndogya* declares that out of his will Brahman became many.[88] According to *Śivāgama*, "from the eternal and sublime prime cause—the *Para Śiva Brahman*—proceeded the first manifestation of His discriminating power viz the Will, *i.e.* the will to self-expression; from the will-power proceeded the power of knowledge and thence the power of action; from this came

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principles from *māyā* downwards are called *ātma tattvas* belonging to the phenomenal world, and *māyā* itself operates as the connecting link between the transcendental and the phenomenal categories. The rest of the evolution takes place as a result of the play of various aspects of the creative force on *māyā*.

The thirty-six categories enumerated above can. therefore be grouped under three main classifications viz (1) the five transcendental principles from *Śiva* to *Śuddahvidyā* (2) The connecting link, *māyā* and the intermediary principle, *puruṣa* with its five-fold sheath or limiting condition and (3) the twenty-four phenomenal categories begining with *prakṛti*. The last class (the phenomenal categories), includes in order: *prakṛti*, the three inner organs (*antahkaraṇa*), the five organs of sense-perception (*jñānendriya*), the five organs of action (*karmendriya*), the five subtle senses (*tanmātras*) and the five gross elements (*bhūtas*).

[88] "बहु स्यां प्रजायेय" (६-२-३)

into being the creatures and the fourteen worlds."[89]

The powers of knowledge and action are only the inner and the outer expressions of the power of will. When *Para Śiva Brahman* unites with the power of *knowledge* and gets self-conscious that He is the all-knower, we have the principle called *Śiva*—the first principle in the evolutionary process. It is in this *Śiva* aspect that the Brahman, by virtue of his power of knowledge becomes the instrumental cause of the would-be world even as the spider constitutes the instrumental cause of the web. When, on the other hand, Brahman unites with the power of *action* and gets self conscious that he is the all-doer, we have the principle or category called *śakti*. It is through this *śakti* aspect that Brahman, by virtue of his power of action, constitutes the material cause of the universe-to-become, like the same spider which, by virtue of its body, capable of producing yarn, becomes the material cause of the web. That the same *Para Śiva Brahman* is alone the undivided material as well as the instrumental cause of the

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[89] अनादिनिधनाच्छान्ताच्छिवात् परमकारणात् ।
इच्छाशक्तिर्विनिष्क्रान्ता ततो ज्ञानं ततः क्रिया ॥
तत्रोत्पन्नानि भूतानि भुवनानि चतुर्दश ॥

universe, is the purport of the spider-and-web simile, contained in the *Mundaka*.[40]

The principle of *śakti*, entering into the power of knowledge which is the inner expression of the will, gets self-conscious (as 'I am this world') in respect of the would-be-world which is just sprouting, and the principle called *Sadāśiva* results; while the same principle of *śakti*, entering into the outer expression of the will, viz power of action, gets self-conscious (as 'I am this world') in respect of the world just sprouted, and the fourth principle called *Īśvara* evolves. When the same *śakti* principle develops the consciousness of identity between the self-sense "I" and the objective world "this" (like the identity between the ocean and its waves), *śuddha vidyā* (pure intelligence)—the fifth principle—evolves. But on the other hand, when the *śakti* which has thus envolved into *śuddha vidyā*, begins to develop the consciousness of distinctions among the subtle varieties of the potential rudiments of the world to-become, existing in itself, (as the potential particularties of the bird in peacock's egg), this consciousness of the mutuallyexclusive distinctions gives rise to the principle called *māyā*.

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[40] यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च । (१·१·७)

After *māyā*, in the order of evolution come the five categories or principles of energy (*kalā*), intelligence (*vidyā*), desire (*rāga*), time (*kāla*) and order (*niyati*), which are together said to form a five-fold envelop (*pañca-kañcuka*) of the next category called *puruṣa* or the self. Since these five envelops are only the limiting sheaths or adjuncts of the dweller within them, we will deal with *puruṣa* first and then consider the principles which constitute his cover.

As the union of two sticks generates sparks of fire, even so, part of Śiva, in accordance with the supreme will, enters *māyā* and becomes the principle called *puruṣa* or the self. When the self gets into contact with the impurities due to *māyā*, he develops the consciousness of pleasure and pain and gets confused with regard to the real nature of the self and the not-self. As he becomes gradually tainted with the impurities of finitude and the like, he gets entangled in the web of life and bondage.

When the self becomes tainted with impurities as above, he loses his original and natural powers of unlimited comprehension, perfection, eternity and pervasion; and instead, becomes limited and imperfect in his powers of will knowledge and action. This limitation gives rise,

to the five principles which are together called, as noticed above, the five-fold sheath or envelop which limits the natural powers of the Soul. Thus, his limited and imperfect capacity for action gives rise to the principle called *kalā* or energy; his limited and imperfect capacity to know gives rise to *vidyā* or intelligence; his imperfection and incapacity to give free expression to will, gives rise to *rāga* or desire; his loss of eternity and the consequent development of the notion of finiteness develops the temporal notions like the past, the present and the future, giving rise to the principle called *kāla* or time; while the loss of his capacity for universal pervasion, generates his notions of fixity and cause-and-effect relations, and thus gives rise to the principle called *niyati* or order. All these five principles—energy, intelligence, desire, time and order—are in effect, the limiting conditions of the soul, differentiating it from the universal spirit from which it proceeded as a part.

The will to self-expression in its creative aspect, reflects in the *māyā* principle, which is, as we have seen, the basis of the notion of distinction between the powers of knowledge and action (as 'knowledge is not action and action is not knowledge') and generates the principle called

prakṛti. *Prakṛti* is primordial matter and is the substratum of the three qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in their state of equilibrium, and thus, it forms the basis for the remaining twenty-three principles from *mahat* down to the gross element of Earth.

From *prakṛti* first evolve the three inner principles, called 'the inner organs' of the body—which are the cognitive principles of *buddhi* (intellect) *ahaṁkāra* (self-sense) and the *manas* (mind). *Buddhi*, also called *mahat*, is the faculty which decides (as 'this is thus'); when the *śakti* principle which has thus evoled itself into *buddhi*, becomes the basis for the sense of 'I' and 'mine,' it is called *ahaṁkāra* or the self sense; when this principle forms the basis of the sense of doubt and the like (as 'whether this is a man or a post'), it is called *manas* or mind. These three principles, being the internal instruments (*antaḥkaraṇa*) within the organism, are the essence of the power of Will (*icchā-śakti*).

The *śakti*-principle which thus evolved itself into the three inner organs, becomes, in its outer expression, the five organs of knowledge. They are: the organ of hearing (*śrotra*) for cognising sound, the organ of feeling (*tvak-tattva*) for cognising the sense of touch, the organ of vision (*netra-tattva*)

for cognising form and colour, the palatal organ (*jihvā*) for cognising the sense of taste and the organ of smell for cognising odour. As these five organs are of the essence of the power of Knowledge, (*jñāna-śakti*) they are called the organs of knowledge (*jñānendriya*). These five sense-organs which are, in effect, the evolved forms of the *śakti* principle, give rise to the five organs of action (*karmendriya*), which partake of the essence of the power of Action (*kriyā-śakti*). These are: the organ of speech (*vāk*) for articulation, hands (*pāṇi*) for actions like giving, feet (*pāda*) for the actions of movement, excretory organs (*pāyu*) for actions of discharging the impurities and the generative organ (*upastha*) for actions of reproduction.

Thus we have seen that the foregoing three sets of inner and outer organs—the three organs of the cognitive process, the five organs of sense perception and the five organs of action—together are the expressions of the three aspects of Śakti, viz the powers of will, knowledge and action (*icchā*, *jñāna* and *kriyā*). The same *śakti* principle evolves itself, on the objective side, into the five subtle principles of sound, touch, colour, taste and odour which constitute the phenomena to be cognised by the five sense-organs detailed above. Thus, sound is cognised exclusively

by the organ of hearing; touch is exclusively experienced by the organ of feeling; form-colour is exclusively perceived by the organ of vision; taste is the exclusive sphere of the palatal organ while odour is the special province of the organ of smelling When the internal distinctions of these five sense qualities are not manifest (*i.e.*, the distinctions like articulate and inarticulate in sound, hot and cold in touch, blue, yellow etc., in colour, sweet or sour in taste, fair and foul in smell), and when they are in their original state, they are known as *tanmātras* or sense-phenomena in their essence.

The final stage in the process of evolution is the manifestation of the five gross elements of Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth, each of which is specially characterised by a preponderance of one of the five sense qualities enumerated above. Thus the *śakti* principle evolves itself into the principle of Ether (*ākāśa*) the distinctive characteristic of which is sound, Air (*vāyu*), whose special feature is the quality of touch, Fire (*tejas*) characterised by the exclusive principle of colour, Water (*jala*) with the quality of taste or *rasa* predominant in it, and Earth (*pṛthivī*) distinguished for the exclusive quality of odour. Among these five elements, each latter element

includes the characteristics of the former while its own special feature remains predominant. Thus we have seen that the whole universe embodying the thirty-six categories or principles described above, is the evolved effect of the supreme reality—the Para Śiva Brāhman united with His Śakti, and that the effects are not illusory but real and permanent in their ultimate abode—the Supreme Being, who is their prime cause. This is the result of the enquiry conducted by the Vīraśaiva philosophers and the result as we have seen, is amply borne out by the authoritative texts of *Śrutis* and *āgamas*.

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LINGĀNGA-SĀMARASYA

or

The ultimate unity of Liṅga and Aṅga— the Lord and the Soul.

In the Vīraśaiva system the ultimate goal*[1] of the souls is described as *aikya* or unity with Śiva, the supreme reality. The soul in *aikya* becomes one with Śiva and enjoys the supreme bliss in union with Him. This final union of the soul with Śiva and this experience of the supreme bliss in community with him is termed *sāmarasya* by the philosophers. *Samarasa* is union

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*[1] As in the other Indian Systems, the fundamental problems of the Vīraśaiva philosophers and their religious quest revolve around Man in this world—his origin, existence and goal, and their enquiry therefore, proceeds entirely from an empirical standpoint viz the investigation into the sufferings of man, their causes and the remedy. How did man, who is by nature, of the essence of consciousness, power and bliss, come to be in fetters? How could he be freed from these shackles so that he may regain his own nature?—These are the problems common to philosophy and religion. Philosophical enquiry diagnoses the nature of the ailment, analyses its causes and prescribes the remedy which religion applies through a rigorous and well-disciplined practical course of conduct leading to the attainment of the desired end. The enquiry

in blissful experience with the Supreme Soul and the state or condition of *samarasa* is *sāmarasya.*[42]

The Supreme Reality—*Para Śiva Brahman* is termed *Sthala* in this system. *Sthala* is the ultimate position or abode. "The wise who know the real have said that the Supreme Reality in which this entire creation of the moving and

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reveals that man's sufferings are due to his ignorance and imperfections arising out of the limitations of his environment; the conclusion we arrive at is that a release from the bondage of births and deaths is the only solution for the problem of human misery and suffering, and that all enquiry and experience must ultimately rest in the one universal experience which is the origin and end of all that exists. The realisation of this ultimate rest is what is called *Mokṣa* or Freedom, the ultimate destiny of the souls. In the Viraśaiva system, this goal or *mokṣa* refers to soul's realisation of its identity with the supreme spirit.

[42] *Samarasa* is the highest and final stage in the progress of the aspirant devotee along the six stages of *bhakti* or devotion viz *Sadbhāva bhakti*, *niṣṭhā bhakti*, *avadhāna bhakti*, *anubhava bhakti*, *ānanda bhakti* and *samarasa bhakti*. The soul, arriving at this last stage of devotion, identifies itself with the supreme spirit and experiences the supreme bliss in perfect community with Him. This state or condition of identity is called *sāmarasya* or identity (in essence) between the Lord (*Liṅga*) and the soul (*Aṅga*), which is the *summum bonum* or the supreme goal to be attained by the aspirant soul in quest.

the non-moving universe becomes dissolved, and stays eternally, is called '*sthala*'—the position or abode."[43] *Sthala*, therefore, is the fixed, permanent and final resting ground of the universe of matter and souls, and this is the one and only *Para Śiva*—the Supreme Spirit.

Para Śiva Brahman, called *sthala*, out of His own sportive will, and by the agitation of His inherent Śakti, becomes divided into *Liṅga* or the Supreme Lord and *Aṅga* (literally a part) or the individual soul,[44] which is the aspirant ever aspiring for unity with the Supreme Being. *Aṅga* or the soul is characterised, as we have seen before, by the power of *chitta* or finite intelligence, while *Liṅga* is the Lord *Para Śiva*, characterised by the power of supreme consciousness.

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[43] स्थीयते लीयते यत्र जगदेतच्चराचरं ।
तद्ब्रह्म स्थलमित्युक्तं स्थलतत्त्वविशारदैः ॥

[44] स्वशक्तिक्षोभमात्रेण स्थलं तद्द्विविधं भवेत् ।
एकं लिंगस्थलं प्रोक्तमन्यदङ्गस्थलं स्मृतम् ॥

(अनुभवसूत्र २-१०)

Similary, the inherent Śakti also becomes, out of her own will, divided into *kalā* and *bhakti*, the former adhering to *Liṅga* (Lord) and the latter to *aṅga* (soul).

Liṅga[45] manifests itself for the redemption of the devotees in three forms—*Iṣṭaliṅga*, *Prāṇaliṅga* and *Bhāvaliṅga* corresponding to the three states of the body—gross, subtle and causal (*sthūla*, *sūkṣma*, and *kāraṇa*). *Aṅga* likewise, assumes three forms.—*Tyāgāṅga*, *Bhogāṅga* and *Yogāṅga*, corresponding to the above three manifestations of *Liṅga*. Each of the three divisions in both, has two parts thus making six parts or positions of *Liṅga* and six of *Aṅga*. *Iṣṭa liṅga* is divided into *ācāra liṅga* and *guru liṅga*; *Prāṇa liṅga* into *śiva liṅga* and *caraliṅga*, and *Bhāva liṅga* into *prasāda liṅga* and *mahāliṅga*. Similarly, *Tyāgāṅga* is divided into *bhakta* and *māheśvara*, *Bhogāṅga* into *prasādi* and *prāṇaliṅgi* and *Yogāṅga* into *śaraṇa* and *aikya*. Further divisions and sub-divisions result in 44 positions of *Aṅga* and 57 positions of *Liṅga*, making a total of 101 *sthalas*, a true knowledge of which only can lead the soul to its ultimate unity with the Supreme Reality. In other words, the union[46]

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[45] लीयते गम्यते यत्र जगत्सर्वं चराचरम् ।
तदेतल्लिंगमित्युक्तं लिंगतत्त्वपरायणैः ॥

(अनुभवसूत्र ३-३)

[46] The progress of the individual soul (*aṅga*) in gradual stages till he has attained the goal, is marked with corresponding stages of attainment which he has reached in the supreme objective manifesting in the form of Liṅga.

of *Aṅga* with *Liṅga* is the only means for freedom of the soul from bondage.

Of the three manifestations of *Liṅga-sthala*, *Iṣṭa liṅga*, is apprehended in the gross form while *Prāṇa liṅga* and *Bhāva liṅga* are realised in subtle and causal forms respectively.[*7] Let us now consider each of these in its positions.

These various stages are marked as six steps or positions in each, leading to the ultimate unity of both (*Liṅga* and *aṅga*) at the end of the final step.

[*7] इष्टलिङ्गमिदं स्थूलं यद्बाह्ये धार्यते तनौ ।
प्राणलिंगं तु तत्सूक्ष्मं यदंतर्भावनामयं ॥
परात्परं तु यत्प्रोक्तं तृप्तिलिंगं तदुच्यते ॥

Bhāvaliṅga is so named because at this stage the *Liṅga*, as it transcends space, time and causation, can be apprhended only by the highest intuition (*bhāva*) born of extreme devotion on the part of the soul, while *Prāṇa liṅga*, also transcendental, corresponds to *prāṇa* or the vital principle and can be apprehended only by the mind. *Iṣṭa linga*, so called because this is the form in which the *Liṅga* can be worshipped by the devotee, is the gross manifetation of the Being and therefore visible to the phenomenal world. These three forms correspond to the soul, *prāṇa* or the vital principle and the material body of *aṅga*, respectively and as such are carried by the symbolism of *Liṅga* being worn on the causal, subtle and the gross bodies of the devotee respectively.

Ācāra liṅga is associated with *bhakta-sthala* (the corresponding first position in *Aṅga*); it is characterised by a part (*kalā*) of Śakti called *nivṛtti*, and is the means of cognising odour. Its sense-seat being the organ of smell, it is the basis for the movements of the vital breath through the nerve centres called *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*; since it constitutes the means for the purification of the body through a proper control of the vital breath, it is called *Ācāra liṅga*.[48]

Guru-liṅga is of the form of the tongue or the palatal organ, the means for cognising taste; it is associated with the second *Aṅga* position, *māheśvara-sthala*, and is characterised by a part (*kalā*) of Śakti called *pratiṣṭhā*. The tongue is the means of uttering the sacred six-syllabled *mantram* which is imparted by the preceptor (*guru*) and this *sthala* is therefore termed *Guru-liṅga*.[49]

Śiva-liṅga is of the form of the organ of vision and is therefore the means for cognising form and colour. It is associated with the third position in *Aṅga* viz *prasādi-sthala* and is

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[48] आचारलिंगं घ्राणाख्यं भक्तस्थलसमाश्रयं ।
निवृत्तिकलयोपेतं गन्धग्रहणसाधनं ॥१॥

[49] गुरुलिंगं तु जिह्वाख्यं महेशस्थलसंश्रयं ।
प्रतिष्ठाकलयोपेतं रसग्रहणसाधनं ॥२॥

characterised by a part (*kalā*) of Śakti called *vidyā*. Since the organ of vision, on account of the presence of Śiva's light in the eyeball, is the means of revealing the objects of the external world, this *Liṅga* is named *Śiva-liṅga*.[60]

Cara-liṅga (also called *Jaṅgama-liṅga*) is of the form of the sense of feeling (*tvak*) and is the means for cognising touch. It is associated with the fourth position in *aṅga* viz *prāṇaliṅgi-sthala* and is characterised by a part (*kalā*) of Śakti called *śānti*. Since the sense of feeling pervades the whole of the external body getting aware of the feelings of hot and cold and the like, and since it is of the essence of Air whose quality is movement, this *Liṅga* is termed as *Cara-liṅga*.[61]

Prasāda-liṅga takes the nature of the sense of hearing and is therefore the means for cognising sound. It is associated with the fifth position of *aṅga* viz *śaraṇa-sthala* and is characterised by a part (*kalā*) of Śakti called *śāntyatīta*. Since the organ of hearing is the means for cognising sound, and

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[60] शिवलिंगं तु नेत्राख्यं प्रसादिस्थलसंश्रयं ।
विद्याकलासमायुक्तं रूपग्रहणसाधनं ॥३॥

[61] त्वगाख्यं जङ्गमंलिंगं प्राणलिंगिस्थलाश्रयं ।
शांत्याख्यकलयोपेतं स्पर्शग्रहणसाधनं ॥४॥

since it is the main channel through which the grace or *prasāda* of the Lord descends in the order of *nāda*, *sunāda*, *nināda*, *mahānāda*, *parā*, *paśyantī*, *madhyamā* and *vaikharī*, this aspect of *Liṅga* becomes known as *Prasāda-liṅga*.[52]

The final position in *Liṅga-sthala* is *Mahāliṅga* which is of the form of *manas* or mind, the means for cognising every kind of experience. It is associated with the final position in *aṅga* viz *aikya-sthala* and is characterised by a part (*kalā*) of Śakti called *śāntyatīta-uttarakalā*. Since the *manas* cognises perceptions of every kind, and since it is the king, as it were, of all the senses, this position is named *Mahā-liṅga*.[53]

We have seen above that *aṅga-sthala* or the individual soul becomes divided into three stages—*Yogāṅga*, *Bhogāṅga* and *Tyāgāṅga* corresponding to the three main positions in *Liṅga* or the

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[52] प्रसादलिंगं श्रोत्राख्यं शरणस्थलसंश्रयं ।
शांत्यतीतकलोपेतं शब्दग्रहणसाधनं ॥५॥

[53] मानसं तु महालिंगमैक्यस्थलसमाश्रयं ।
शांत्यतीतोत्तरोपेतं सर्वग्रहणसाधनं ॥६॥

Each of the above positions of *Liṅga* is associated with one of the corresponding position of *aṅga*, is distinguished by one of the six *kalās* or parts of Śakti, and is identified as occupying a sense-seat with the cognising faculty peculiar to that sense.

Supreme Being.[54] We shall now consider the nature of these three stages and the six positions in which they are seen.

Yogāṅga is so called because at this stage, the aspirant identifies himself with the three visible forms of the Supreme Being viz the *guru* (the preceptor) the *jaṅgama* (the devotee who has attained realisation) and the *liṅga* (the deity). In the *Bhogāṅga* stage he experiences the grace (*prasāda*) of the Lord through offerings dedicated

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[54] अंगस्थलं तथा प्रोक्तमाचार्यैः सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ।
योगांगं प्रथमं प्रोक्तं भोगांगं च द्वितीयकं ॥
त्यागांगं च तृतीयं स्यादित्येवं त्रिविधं स्मृतं ॥

The corresponding stages in the subjective attainment of the devotee, which constitute his own equipment, are marked as three steps—*Yogānga*, *Bhogāṅga* and *Tyāgānga*. The first indicates the highest stage of devotional development which the soul has attained and where it is ready to realise its identity with the final position of the final stage in *Liṅga*. *Bhogānga* is the next lower stage where the soul enjoys the bliss of God's grace and this corresponds to the middle stage of *Liṅga* viz *Prāṇa Linga*. *Tyāgāṅga* is the first stage in the upward progress of the devotee and here, after acquiring the necessary spiritual qualifications, he has surrendered himself with a complete and unreserved dedication of his body, mind and soul, to the service of the Lord. This corresponds to the first state to be realised in his objective viz *Iṣṭaliṅga*.

to *guru*, *liṅga* and *jaṅgamas*. *Tyāgāṅga* derives its name because the aspirant in this stage surrenders himself with all his body, mind and soul, to the *guru*, *liṅga* and *jaṅgama*,[55] without any reservation.

The nature of the aspirant in these six positions is described as follows—The *bhakta* is virtuous; does not descriminate between the *guru*, *linga* and *jaṅgama*; has unswerving devotion to the symbols of the Lord and His devotees.[56]

The *māhêśwara* is one that engages himself in selfless and God-dedicated charity and with his sole and exclusive aim on Śiva, surrenders himself to His service.[57] When *māhêśwara* solicits the grace of Śiva for the sake of purifying and cleansing his mind and for the sake of attaining pure knowledge, he is in the position of *prasādi*.[58] When the

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[55] The aspirant is recommended to look upon his own preceptor (*Guru*) and the other devotees of the Lord *Jaṅgamas*) as the visible forms of God Himself.

[56] सदाचारः शिवे भक्तिर्लिंगे जङ्गम एकधीः ।
लांछने शरणे भक्तिर्भक्तस्थलमनुत्तमं ॥

[57] केवले सहजे दाने निष्णातः शिवतत्परः ।
ब्रह्मादिस्थानविमुखो भक्तो माहेश्वरःस्मृतः ॥

[58] मनःप्रसादसिद्ध्यर्थं निर्मलज्ञानकारणं ।
शिवप्रसादं स्वीकुर्वन् प्रसादीत्येष कथ्यते ॥

prasādi attains to the discriminative knowledge that *Para Śiva* is supreme consciousness and that the Śakti existing in Him is of the nature of His vital energy, and that *Liṅga* is of the essence and form of both Supreme Conciousness and Śakti, then he is in the position of *prāṇalingi.*[59] When the *prāṇaliṅgi* views *Liṅga* as the Supreme Lord and himself as the consort and in this contemplation loses himself in ecstacy and becomes oblivious to the material world, he has attained to the position of *Śaraṇa.*[60] When at last the *Śaraṇa* who has already begun to experience the bliss by being in contact with *Prāṇa liṅga*, gets gradually to identify himself with Śiva and feels himself one with Him and thus becomes united with Him in His blissful experience, he has reached the final position of *aikya* or identity.[61] Thus, these six positions from *bhakta* to *aikya*, form six steps, as it were, to the final absolution or *mukti*. *Bakta-sthala* which is the first position in *aṅga*, is a part of the first

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[59] लिंगं चिदात्मकं ब्रह्म तच्छक्तिः प्राणरूपिणी ।
तद्रूपलिंगविज्ञानी प्राणलिंगीति कथ्यते ॥

[60] सतीवाहं पतिर्लिंगं हृदि युक्तः स्वयं प्रभुः ।
प्रापंचिकसुखं नास्ति शरणस्थलमुत्तमं ॥

[61] प्राणलिंगादियोगेन सुखातिशयमेयिवान् ।
शरणाख्यः शिवेनैक्यभावनादैक्यवान् भवेत् ॥

position of *Liṅga* viz *Acāra liṅga*, and therefore becomes united with it; in the same way, *māhēśwara* becomes united with *Guru liṅga*, *prasādi* with *Śivaliṅga*, *prāṇaliṅgi* with *Caraliṅga* (*jaṅgamaliṅga*), *śaraṇa* with *Prasāda liṅga* while *aikya* becomes identified with the final position viz *Mahā liṅga*.

Similarly, *Ācāra liṅga* becomes united with the next higher position, *Guru liṅga*, *Guru* with *Śiva*, Śiva with *Cara* or *Jaṅgama*, *Jaṅgama* with *Prasāda* and *prasāda* with *Mahāliṅga* while at last, *Mahāliṅga* becomes one with *Ghanaliṅga* or the Supreme Śiva the ultimate and the only one changeless Position. Thus does the individual soul raise himself, through the grace of the Lord, in gradual stages, till at last he becomes one with Śiva, in the experience of the supreme bliss and this condition is called *sāmarasya*.[62]

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[62] By the foregoing analysis it will be seen that the *Aṅga* is the subject-aspirant ever aspiring for the realisation of his identity with the Supreme Spirit, while *Liṅga*, the manifestation of Reality, constitutes the object to be attained. How far has the subject progressed in his devotional endeavour to realise his objective must be seen in two aspects—subjective and objective. What stage has he reached in the development of his own powers in his march towards the goal, and how much has he attained of the objective which he has been pursuing—these are the

As *Mundaka* says, even as the rivers, on reaching the ocean, leave off all the distinctions of name and form, and mingling in the ocean become united with it in oneness, the souls which know Brahman, leave off all distinctions of their name and form and become united with the supreme reality into one,[68] and this is the nature of the *sāmarasya* that the Vīraśaiva, knowing reality,

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two ways ot looking at the progress of the individual soul towards self-realisation, and it should not be forgotten that the self-imposed division of the Supreme Spirit into *Linga* and *Anga* is solely out of compassion for and with a view to redeem the souls entangled in the meshes of *saṁsara* and that therefore the entire scheme must be viewed from the perspective of the individual soul.

Thus when the aspirant-devotee has completed the first (*Tyāgānga*) stage of his own development, he is in union with *Iṣṭa Linga*, the visible symbol of Reality. At the end of the next higher stage (*i.e. Bhogānga* stage) he is in union with *Prāṇa Linga*, the subtle manifestation of the Supreme Being, and when he reaches the final position in the last stage of his development viz the *aikya* position in *Yogānga* stage, the soul attains union with the final and highest state in *Linga* (viz *Mahālinga sthala*) and here the soul's union with the Supreme Being has become complete and *sāmarasya* is attained.

[68] यथा नद्यः स्यंद्‌मानाः समुद्रे अस्तं गच्छंति नामरूपे विहाय, तथा विद्वान्नामरूपाद्विमुक्तः परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यं ॥ (३ २-८).

attains finally. When he is thus united with *Para Śiva* in oneness he is no more distinct from that Supreme reality of which he was but a part but now become one with. Or as *Reṇukāchārya* says "Like the water, placed in water, fire in fire, the soul that becomes mingled in the supreme Brahman is not seen as distinct."[64] In other words, when the Vīraśaiva, by going through the six positions described above, attains the condition of *sāmarasya* with *Liṅga*, like the fire in fire and water in water, he gets mingled in the Supreme Spirit and becomes His nature. Thus, the soul (*aṅga*) which is but a part and of the essence of the Supreme Spirit, but which had only come to be differentiated on account of ignorance, gets at last to realise its own nature in essential unity with the Supreme Being (*Liṅga*) and enjoys the eternal bliss in perfect community with Him. This identical union in essence, of the soul (*Aṅga*) with the Supreme Being (*Liṅga*), is expressed by the term *Liṅga-aṅga-sāmarasya* or the identity of the Soul with Śiva (*śivaikyam*)—the ultimate goal of the *Śakti Viśiṣṭādvaita* philosophy.

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[64] जले जलमिव न्यस्तं वह्नौ वह्निरिवार्पितः ।
परे ब्रह्मणि लीनात्मा विभागेन न दृश्यते ॥२॥

(परिच्छेद २०)

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